

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS, COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS
IN ASCENDING ORDER WITH STATUS INDICATOR

Please amend the following claims as indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for filtering a sample using a sample collecting container that includes:

a sample collection part storing a collected liquid sample and having an opening;

a plug member provided so as to hermetically seal the opening;

a filter member provided in the sample collection part, for filtering the sample collected in the sample collection part; and

a sample storage part for storing a sample filtered by the filter member, the internal pressure thereof being reduced in advance,

wherein after collecting a sample in the sample collection part using a vacuum blood collection needle, the sample is filtered by a pressure difference between the sample collection part and the sample storage part, while the plug member is pierced by a communication needle having a communication flow channel to establish communication between the sample collection part and the exterior, thereby elevating the internal pressure of the sample collection part,

wherein a communication between an internal space of the sample collection part and atmosphere occurs (1) after collecting the sample in the sample collection part and (2) due to the piercing of the plug member by the communication needle having the communication flow channel.

2. (Original) The method for filtering a sample according to claim 1, wherein the communication needle is a hollow needle.

3. (Original) The method for filtering a sample according to claim 1, wherein the communication needle has a communication groove formed on its outer surface and the communication groove extends from a needlepoint toward an end opposite to the needlepoint.

4. (Previously Presented) A jig for collecting a sample used for communicating the interior and the exterior of a sample collecting container that includes a sample collection part storing a collected liquid sample and having an opening, and a plug member provided so as to hermetically seal the opening, the jig comprising:

a communication needle having a communication flow channel extending from the side of a needlepoint to the other end opposite to the needlepoint; a gripping portion attached to the side of the other end of the communication needle; a skirt portion extending in the axial direction of the communication needle from the gripping portion; and at least one vane provided on the side of the needlepoint of the communication needle,

wherein the vane has a shape that approaches the communication needle as they extend to their tip ends.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of filtering a sample jig~~ according to claim 4, wherein the communication needle is a hollow needle.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of filtering a sample jig~~ according to claim 4, wherein the communication needle has a communication groove formed on its outer surface and the communication groove extends from a needlepoint toward an end opposite to the needlepoint.

7. (Original) A sample collecting container that enables filtration of a liquid sample, comprising:

a sample collection part having an opening and storing a collected liquid sample;
a plug member provided so as to hermetically seal the opening;
a filter member provided in the sample collection part, for filtering the sample collected in the sample collection part; and
a sample storage part for storing the sample filtered by the filter member,
the sample collection part, the filter member and the sample storage part being hermetically connected with each other and the internal pressure of sample storage part being reduced in advance,

wherein the plug member has a through hole that establishes communication between the sample collection part the exterior, and the through hole is hermetically sealed by a removable sealing member on the outer surface of the plug member.

8. (Original) The sample collecting container according to claim 7, wherein the sealing member is a sheet affixed to the outer surface of the plug member so as to cover the outer surface where the through hole of the plug member is open.

9. (Original) The sample collecting container according to claim 7, wherein the sealing member is a plug press-fitted into the through hole.

10. (Original) A sample collecting container that enables filtration of a liquid sample, comprising:

- a sample collection part having an opening and storing a collected liquid sample;
- a plug member pressed into the opening so as to hermetically seal the opening;
- a filter member provided in the sample collection part, for filtering the sample collected in the sample collection part; and
- a sample storage part for storing the sample filtered by the filter member,

the sample collection part, the filter member and the sample storage part being hermetically connected with each other and the internal pressure of sample storage part being reduced in advance,

wherein an open through hole is formed in a part of inner surface of the sample collection part that is in contact with the plug member, and a flow channel is formed in a part of outer surface of the plug member contacting the inner surface of the sample collection part, the flow channel establishing communication between the through hole and the interior of the sample collection part when its circumferential position is brought into coincidence with the through hole.

11. (Currently Amended) A sample collecting container that enables filtration of a liquid sample, comprising:

a sample collection part having an opening and storing a collected liquid sample;
a plug member provided so as to hermetically seal the opening;
a filter member provided in the sample collection part, for filtering the sample collected in the sample collection part; and

a sample storage part for storing a sample filtered by the filter member,
the sample collection part, the filter member and the sample storage part being hermetically connected with each other and the internal pressure of sample storage part being reduced in advance,

wherein an open through hole is formed in a part of inner surface of the sample collection part that is in contact with the plug member, and a flow channel is formed in the plug member in such a manner that when the plug member is drawn out from the sample collection part while keeping hermetical sealing between the plug member and the inner surface of the sample collection part, one end of the flow channel is opposite to the through hole and the other end of the flow channel is open in the sample collection part,

wherein the plug member comprises a gripping portion and a press-in portion, and

wherein the flow channel comprises a recess formed in a part of an outer periphery of the press-in portion.